

## Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 L-02 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /079 W

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R 041200Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1472

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 2258

DEPARTMENT PASS LABOR DEPT (ILAB)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, SP

SUBJECT: SPANISH FIRESTONE STRIKE - ICF INVOLVEMENT

REF A. MADRID 1922 B. GENEVA 2156

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: TWO AND ONE-HALF MONTH STRIKE OF 3,500 WORKERS AT FIRESTONE HISPANIA BILBAO FACTORY MAY FINALLY BE ON WAY TO SOLUTION, IN VIEW OF COMPANY'S REVERSAL OF ITS REFUSAL TO READMIT FIRED STRIKE RINGLEADERS. INVOLVEMENT ICF'S LEVINSON MAY HAVE PLAYED A ROLE IN COMPANY'S ABOUT FACE, ALTHOUGH THIS UNCLEAR EPISODE DEMONSTRATES EFFECTIVE SUPPORT ITS' CAN GIVE THEIR SPANISH FREE TRADE UNION AFFILIATES. END SUMMARY

2. KEY ISSUE POISONING FIRESTONE STRIKE INVOLVES FIRING A MONTH AGO OF 16 ALLEGED STRIKE RINGLEADERS, WHO THEN TOOK CASE TO LABOR COURT WHERE JUDGE ON MAR 22 UPHELD WORKERS CONTENTION THEY HAD BEEN UNFAIRLY DISMISSED  
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AND TOLD FIRESTONE TO REHIRE THEM. FIRESTONE APPEALED

LABOR COURT'S DECISION, WHICH APPEAL STILL PENDING.  
MEANWHILE FIRESTONE WORKERS STILL ON STRIKE UNTIL ALL FIRED  
WORKERS READMITTED. ADDITIONALLY, ONE OF 16 HAS NOT HAD  
HIS CASE HEARD BEFORE LABOR COURT SINCE WORKER WAS REPORTEDLY  
TOO SICK TO APPEAR MAR 22.

3. NEW DEVELOPMENT, WHICH MAY END STRIKE, IS THAT FIRESTONE HAS  
AGREED TEMPORARILY READMIT WORKERS AS ORDERED BY LABOR COURT,  
PENDING APPEAL DECISION AND WITHOUT PREJUDICE ITS APPEAL. EVEN  
SHOULD FIRESTONE WORKERS RESUME WORK IMMEDIATELY, HOWEVER, COMPLEX  
ISSUES WHICH LED TO STRIKE, E.G., WORKER REPRESENTATIVITY, WAGE  
INCREASE DEMANDS, ETC., WILL STILL REMAIN UNRESOLVED.

4. MYSTERY ALSO STILL SURROUNDS BOMB DESTRUCTION SUMMER HOME  
SPANISH FIRESTONE EXECUTIVE ON MAR 20 (REF A), ALTHOUGH GENERAL  
VIEW IS THAT IT WAS ETA EFFORT TO GET INTO FIRESTONE ACT. CALL  
FOR BASQUE GENERAL STRIKE APR 1 IN SOLIDARITY AGAINST FIRESTONE,  
HOWEVER, WAS NEAR-TOTAL FAILURE.

5. INVOLVEMENT CHARLES LEVINSON OF ICF (REFB) WAS REPORTEDLY  
PROMPTED BY TWO SPANISH CLANDESTINE ICF AFFILIATES, IE., CATHOLIC-  
ORIENTED USO AND SOCIALIST UGT (UGT LEADER FELIPE GONZALEZ WAS ALSO  
ONE OF LABOR LAWYERS WHO SUCCESSFULLY ARGUED CASE AGAINST FIRE  
STONE AT LABOR COURT). HOWEVER, ALL CLANDESTINE LABOR GROUPS,  
INCLUDING COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKERS COMMISSIONS, HAVE BECOME  
INVOLVED AND SOUGHT TO OUTDO EACH OTHER IN FIRESTONE STRIKE.  
CONSUL BILBAO REPORTS THAT FIRESTONE HISPANIA IS ONLY 26PERCENT  
OWNED BY FIRESTONE CORP, WITH REMAINING STOCK OWNED BY SPANISH  
INTERESTS, MOSTLY BANKS. THEREFORE, DESPITE LEVINSON'S REPORTED  
PLAN FOR POSSIBLE WORLDWIDE ACTION AGAINST FIRESTONE CORP, LATTER  
MAY HAVE LIMITED LEVERAGE ON FIRESTONE HISPANIA.

6 COMMENT: LEVINSON'S INVOLVEMENT MAY WELL HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO  
SUDDEN REVERSAL ON REHIRING FIRED WORKERS. IN ANY EVENT, ICF  
CAN PROBABLY CLAIM SOME CREDIT FOR COMPANY'S SUDDEN ACCOMMODATION.  
UNFORTUNATELY, ICF'S INVOLVEMENT UNLIKELY RECEIVE MUCH PUBLICITY  
INSIDE SPAIN, AND CREDIT FOR CO'S ABOUT FACE LIKELY TO BE GENERALLY  
ATTRIBUTED TO MORE EXTREMIST CLANDESTINE GROUPS. NONETHELESS, ICF  
INVOLVEMENT ILLUSTRATES EFFECTIVE ROLE WHICH ITS' INTERNATIONAL  
TRADE SECRETARIATS CAN PLAY IN SPAIN IN SUPPORT THEIR CLANDESTINE  
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SPANISH AFFILIATES. (1974 INTERVENTION BY LEVINSON AT USO'S REQUEST  
WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN RESOLVING, ON TERMS FAVORABLE TO WORKERS,  
STRIKES AT BARCELONA AFFILIATES OF DUTCH AND BELGIAN COMPANIES.)

7. SIGNIFICANTLY, GOVT LABOR ENTITIES HAVE BEEN WORKING AT CROSS  
PURPOSES IN FIRESTONE STRIKE. THUS, DURING MIDMARCH BILBAO VISIT,  
LABATT WAS TOLD LABOR MINISTRY HAD URGED FIRESTONE MANAGEMENT NOT  
TO FIRE 16 WORKERS IF THEY WANTED TO END STRIKE, WHILE SSO URGED

FIRESTONE TO FIRE RINGLEADERS TO END STRIKE AND PRESERVE PLANT  
DISCIPLINE (FIRESTONE CHOSE TO FOLLOW SSO'S ADVICE). ALTHOUGH  
TEMPORARY READMISSION OFFER TO FIRED FIRESTONE WORKERS APPEARS TO  
OPEN WAY FOR RESUMPTION OF PRODUCTION AND OF NEGOTIATION ON  
VARIOUS ISSUES, THIS LONG AND BITTER STRIKE STILL NOT YET FULLY  
SETTLED, ALTHOUGH IT BELIEVED WORKERS MAY COMMENCE  
RETURNING TO WORK TODAY OR TOMORROW.  
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